(d) whether the Centrally Sponsored District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is being merged with PRI;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether Government have sought views of different State Governments in this regard; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj aims to ensure that funds meant for Panchayats are transferred to them without delay or diversion in accordance with the National Common Minimum Programme of the Government. Utilisation of funds pertaining to major schemes transferred to Panchayats are monitored electronically by the Ministry of Rural Development through software developed by NIC in this regard.

(d) to (g) In the First Round Table to State Ministers of Panchayati Raj held at Kolkata in July 2004, it was resolved that the role of District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) should be reconceived as an important instrument for Panchayati Raj development through the progressive merger of DRDAs with the District Panchayats. The technical expertise and other facilities of the DRDAs should become available to all tiers of the PRIs under the overall responsibility and disciplinary control of the elected authority in the PRIs at the appropriate level. The activities of the reconceived DRDAs with respect to the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system should be patterned on the activity map for the devolution of functions, functionaries and funds so that all the three tiers of PRIs have equitable access to the resources, expertise, facilities and manpower of the DRDAs.

In five States, namely, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal, DRDAs have been merged with Zilla Parishads.

Permanent Seat in Security Council

t*279. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Japan is opposing the move to grant

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

permanent membership to India, Germany and Brazil in the Security Council of the United Nations Organisations;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the mutual co-operation in different fields between India and Japan is likely to be adversely affected; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) No, Sir. Japan, along with India, Germany and Brazil, constitute the G-4, which had introduced a framework resolution for the reform and expansion, in both permanent and non-permanent categories, of the United Nations Security Council, in the last Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). After consultations within the G-4, this resolution was re-tabled by India, Germany and Brazil in the current UNGA Session. Japan continues to be positively involved in these consultations.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Implementation of Akshay Urja Dukan

t*280 SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme of public participation in the development of "Akshay Urja Dukan";

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of the districts and the States where this scheme would be implemented and by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources has introduced a new scheme to support the creation of a network of retail outlets in the form of Akshay Urja Shops for sale and service of solar energy and other renewable energy products. Support is available in the form of soft loans for setting up the shops alongwith a recurring grant linked to performance of the shops over a specified period. The shops can be established by reputed NGOs, State Nodal Agencies, manufacturers' associations and private entrepreneurs.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.